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AUTHOR Utt, Sandra H.; Pasternack, Steve
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ABSTRACT

Through an examination of the appearance of the front pages of separately owned, competitive newspapers in 10 cities in the United States, a study explored the extent to which these newspapers have become modern in their use of graphic devices. Specifically, the study investigated (1) the relationship between a market's newspaper circulation gap and the likelihood of appearance similarity between the two daily newspapers, (2) whether the circulation trailer tended to use more modern graphic devices than the circulation leader, (3) whether morning newspapers tended to be more traditional in their appearance than evening or all-day newspapers, and (4) whether a newspaper's total circulation is related to its use of modern graphic devices. Data revealed that pairs of competing newspapers tended to be more similar in their use of graphic devices than those not in close competition, that newspaper trailers tended to use more modern graphics than leaders, and that larger circulation newspapers tended to use more traditional graphics than smaller circulation newspapers. The findings suggest that as competition increases, sameness in newspaper appearance increases. (Copies of scales used in the study are appended). (CRH)

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THE USE OF GRAPHIC DEVICES IN A COMPETITIVE SITUATION: A CASE STUDY OF 10 CITIES

By
Sandra H. Utt, Ph.D.
Texas A&M University
and
Steve Pasternack, Ph.D.
New Mexico State University

Accepted by the Visual Communication Division, Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication, Gainesville, Fla. August 4-8, 1984.

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ABSTRACT

The Use Of Graphic Devices In A Competitive Situation:
A Case Study of 10 Cities

By
Sandra H. Utt, Texas A&M University
Steve Pasternack, New Mexico State University

Newspaper wars of today are quite often a struggle for survival as much as they are a battle for market dominance. Only 51 markets today have separately owned and competing daily newpapers.

And of those 51 markets, only 10 fulfill the following criteria: competing, separately owned newspapers, both of which are standard size and have an average daily circulation of more than 100,000.

Those markets and papers selected from the 1983 Editor & Publisher Yearbook include: Los Angeles Times and Herald Examiner; Detroit News and Free Press; San Francisco Chronicle and Examiner; Houston Chronicle and Post; St. Louis Post-Gazette and Globe-Democrat; Dallas Morning News and Times Herald; Columbus Dispatch and Citizen Journal; Baltimore Sun and News American; Pittsburgh Press and Post-Gazette and the Cincinnati Enquirer and Post.

The purpose of this paper is to examine the appearance of the front pages of separately owned newspapers which are in a competitive situation and to explore the extent to which these newspapers have become modern in their use of graphic devices.

The study has the following research questions: 1) What is the relationship between a market's newspaper circulation gap and the likelihood of appearance similarity between the two daily newspapers? 2) Does the circulation trailer tend to use more modern graphic devices than the circulation leader? 3) Do morning newspapers tend to be more traditional in their appearance than evening or all-day newspapers? 4) How does a newspaper's total circulation relate to its likelihood of use contemporary graphic devices?

Findings include: Pairs of competing newspapers in close circulation battles tend to be more similar in their use graphic devices than those which are not in close circulation battles.

Newspaper trailers tend to be more modern in their use of modern graphic devices than newspaper leaders. This tendency proved to be accurate for eight of the 10 markets with Pittsburgh and St. Louis as the exceptions.

The larger circulation newspapers tended to be the most traditional while the smaller circulation papers tended to be the most modern in their use of graphic design elements.

The results of this study suggest that in America's largest competitive newspaper markets, there is a trend toward conformity

of appearance. Generally, as the competition increases, so does the sameness.

For a complete paper, write to:
Sandra H. Utt
Department of Journalism
Memphis State University
Memphis, Tennessee 38152

THE USE OF GRAPHIC DEVICES IN A COMPETITIVE SITUATION: A CASE STUDY OF 10 CITIES

One of the cornerstones of American journalism has traditionally been competition between--and sometimes among--daily newspapers. In several instances, competition has led to higher-quality newspapers, but perhaps its greatest contribution has been the multitude of voices it can offer.[1]

During the last 150 years, newspapers in cities across the United States have literally waged competitive wars.[2] At stake: increased circulation, more ad lineage, higher profits and market dominance. The means to achieve such ends have run the gamut from beefed-up local coverage to a host of promotional gimmicks. But, until recently, newspapers rarely focused their competitive energies on layout and design, both of which were perceived more as a necessary chore than a journalistic art form.[3]

However, that mood is changing. In recent years, daily newspapers have become increasingly concerned about how they look as well as what they say.[4] This increased level of attention to layout and design has occurred at a time when the number of competing daily newspapers in the United States continues its downward spiral.[5] Quite often, the newspaper wars of today are a struggle for survival as much as they are a battle for market dominance. Only 51 markets today have separately owned and competing daily newspapers.[6] The fallout from a newspaper war today is often a monopoly situation.

Of those 51 markets, only 10 fulfill the following criteria: competing, separately owned daily newspapers, both of which are standard size and have an average daily circulation of more than 100,000. (See Table 1)

These 10 cities illustrate a national trend in which the number of daily newspapers has declined, while readership has increased.[8] These cities had a combined total of 38 daily newspapers in 1930 with a combined circulation of 5.4 million.[9] Over the years, newspapers such as the Dallas Dispatch, St. Louis Star and Pittsburgh Sun Telegraph have folded, leaving these 10 cities with 20 dailies and a combined circulation of 6.3 million copies today.

This phenomenon of disappearing dailies has turned many cities into one-newspaper towns.[10] Others have more than one newspaper, but often they are jointly owned. In fact, in about half of the markets with competing and separately owned dailies, one of the newspapers is in danger of financial collapse.[11] Of course, along with these other trends, the percentage of dailies which are independently owned continues to decrease.[12]

PREVIOUS RESEARCH

Studies of newspaper appearance in recent years have fallen into three main categories: what newspapers are doing, how readers are reacting and the relationship between appearance and competition.

What newspapers are doing: Evidence of changes in newspaper appearance need not come solely from research. A glance at most newsracks across the nation attests to the conclusion that, as a

Table 1
The 20 Newspapers Under Study

City	Newspaper	Rank[1]	Circulation	Time	Owner	Date Est.
Los Angeles	Times	3	1,052,637	M	Times Mirror Group	1881
	Herald	30	278,009	M	Hearst	1871
Detroit	News	9	642,531	All	Independent	1873
	Free Press	10	631,989	M	Knight Ridder	1865
San Francisco	Chronicle	12	537,621	M	Chronicle Pub. Co.	1865
	Examiner	67	156,777	E	Hearst	1865
Houston	Chronicle	18	419,869	All	Independent	1901
	Post	20	376,455	M	Toronto Sun Pub. Co.	1885
St. Louis	Post-Dispatch	41	235,520	E	Pultizer	1878
	Globe-Democrat	34	260,572	M	For Sale	1852
Pittsburgh	Press	35	259,850	E	Scripps Howard	1884
	Post-Gazette	57	181,583	M	Block Newspaper Gr.	1842
Dallas	Morning News	24	317,279	M	Independent	1885
	Times Herald	31	269,409	All	Times Mirror Group	1879
Columbus	Dispatch	48	204,141	E	Independent	1871
	Citizen Journal	95	119,196	M	Scripps Howard	1899
Baltimore	Sun	55	183,188	All	Independent	1837
	News American	73	137,387	E	Hearst	1872
Cincinnati	Enquirer	51	191,571	M	Gannett	1841
	Post	70	142,746	E	Scripps Howard	1881

[1]National Average Daily Circulation Rank

rule, newspapers are more colorful, have more photographs and fewer column rules than ever before. Even the normally staid New York Times has, to an extent, hopped onto the modernization bandwagon.[13]

However, beginning in the 1970s, communication researchers began studying newspaper appearance in a systematic way and found nationwide evidence of a changing newspaper look. For example, newspapers were found to be generally going from a vertical to a horizontal layout[14] and a 6-column page.[15]

In a study of front pages at 78 daily newspapers, Pasternack and Utt[16] found that many of the innovations of the 1970s were becoming mainstays of the 80s. For example, they found a strong trend toward a modular format. They also found that the flag no longer is bound to the top of the front page, that newspapers are starting fewer stories on the front page and varying their column widths regularly.

A study by the Newspaper Advertising Bureau[17] found that newspapers are changing their typefaces, using more photographs and redesigning their mastheads.

In another study of newspapers with circulations exceeding 60,000, Finberg[18] found that 52 percent of the papers ran between six and 10 graphics daily, and 3 percent ran more than 20 graphics daily.

How readers are reacting: Not a great deal is known about what readers like and dislike about the way their newspapers look. First, readership studies often focus on content and ignore appearance. In fact, editors indicated that most graphic devices they use are not highly noticeable to readers.[19]

Indeed, when Starck[20] studied audience perceptions of possible functions of a newspaper, only one of the 68 functions he listed was related to appearance, and his subjects' response to that function was mixed.[21]

Nonetheless, a composite of reader likes and dislikes can be drawn from some recent studies: generally, readers like modern formats,[22] front page photos,[23] color[24] and front page news summaries along the page's left side.[25] Lower approval was given to a shift from a traditional to a modern flag.[26]

While Pasternack and Utt[27] did not conduct a readership preference study, they did ask editors their perceptions of reader satisfaction with appearance. Editors said they detect approval of color and well-organized pages.

Siskind[28] suggested in her 1979 research that readers may not prefer good design as editors define it. Nonetheless, she found that readers find contemporary design "more informative and interesting." She urged editors to be "concerned with the quality of design"[29] if they seek to appeal to readers.

After the Orlando (Fla.) Sentinel was recently redesigned, readers responded favorably to those changes: two-thirds of those surveyed said they found the redesigned product "bright and lively."[30]

Another case study found that "reader compliments are still pouring in" after the Chula Vista (Calif.) Star-News was redesigned. The paper adopted a modern flag and added color and graphics.[31]

Appearance and competition: The relationship between

newspaper appearance and competition has not been authoritatively established in previous scholarly research; however, but the anecdotal evidence is widespread.

A perusal of trade journals such as Editor & Publisher and Publishers' Auxiliary attests to the fact that newspapers are changing their packages, and often it is the result of a circulation battle.

For example, the Wabash (Ind.) Plain Dealer, involved in a circulation battle, recently redesigned its front page, even placing a comic strip on page one.[32] The Trenton Times in New Jersey has redesigned its product as part of an ongoing circulation battle,[33] and the Pittsburgh Press now calls itself the "new face in town."[34] Observers in both Florida[35] and Texas[36] note that newspaper competition has led to graphic innovation and improvement. "The fiercely competitive Dallas papers stress attractive makeup and graphics."[37]

While competition has added some color in Baltimore,[38] the circulation battles in Detroit,[39] San Francisco,[40] and Houston[41] appear to be focusing mainly on news coverage.

However, scholarly studies directly linking newspaper appearance and circulation were non-existent until the middle 1970s when Weaver, Mullins and McCombs[42] studied market "leaders" and "trailers" in 23 cities across the country, comparing both content and appearance. Their conclusion:

> There was a tendency for the "trailing" newspapers to use more contemporary formats (no column rules, fewer numbers of stories on the front page, color photographs, large photographs, smaller headlines, six-column lay out (sic) and 'dingbats.') Again, there is no evidence

to indicate whether use of contemporary format leads to more or less circulation.[43]

However, the results were tempered by the finding that among the largest circulation dailies and in the north-central region, the trends were reversed.

Beyond this 1974 study, little research has directly examined the relationship between appearance and circulation/competition. Schweitzer, Weaver and Stone[44] discovered that when a city has jointly owned a.m. and p.m. newspapers, those pairs which look alike have a slight tendency to reach a higher percentage of two-newspaper households.

In a study which did not specifically deal with competition, Click and Stempel[45] found no relationship between a newspaper's circulation and format.

Pasternack and Utt[46] found that editors overwhelmingly (95 percent) felt that in a competitive situation, appearance can be a critical factor. But, only 49.4 percent of those editors felt that design was a factor for a person choosing a newspaper.

However, other research which did not deal directly with appearance may offer clues to the link between appearance and competition.

Rarick and Hartman[47] found that as competitive pressure in a given market increases, so does a newspaper's selection of "immediate reward items." While the study dealt only with content, the results may be applicable to appearance, which is an "immediate reward" item.

Other studies found that local competition does not affect content,[48] and may, in fact, lead to a high degree of

conformity.[49] More recent research has found that competing newspapers, whether under a joint operating agreement[50] or not,[51] tend to be remarkably similar in content.

PURPOSE

One purpose of this paper is to examine the appearance of the front pages of separately owned newspapers which are in a competitive situation. A second purpose is to explore the extent to which these newspapers have become modern in their use of graphic devices.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This study has the following research questions:

1. What is the relationship between a market's newspaper circulation gap (difference between circulations) and the likelihood of appearance similarity between the two daily newspapers?

2. Does the circulation "trailer" tend to use more modern graphic devices than the circlation "leader?"

3. Do morning newspapers tend to be more traditional in their appearance than evening or all-day newspapers?

4. How does a newspaper's total circulation relate to its likelihood of using contemporary graphic devices?

METHOD

Newspapers with the following criteria were selected from the 1983 Editor and Publisher Yearbook:

1. standard size (non-tabloid) publication;

2. an average daily circulation of 100,000 or more; and

3. in a competitive situation with another separately owned paper that also is standard size with an average daily circulation of 100,000 or more located in the same city. (See Table 1)

The use of graphic devices (See Appendix A, Distance Scale) was examined for all 20 newspapers for the week of Monday, Jan. 16 through Friday, Jan. 20.[52] Their use was graded between 0-10, with a zero score given if both papers did not use the graphic device: news digest, for example.

Pairs of papers using similar graphic devices were given a lower score (closer to one) while those which differed were given a higher score (closer to 10).

Those individually scored items were then summed to obtain the graphic distance score between those competing papers. As the distance scale included 30 items, with each item's score ranging from zero to 10, the range of the distance score total was zero to 300. The lower the score, the more similar the two newspapers' front page appearance, while the higher the score, the more different the newspapers' front page design.

Additionally, modern graphic devices (See Appendix B, Modern Graphic Devices Scale) were graded between 1-3 with the lower score representing a more traditional style and the higher score representing a more modern style. (For example, a traditional text flag received a one; a Roman face received a two, and a sanserif, modern flag received a three.) Those individually scored items were then summed to obtain a modern

graphic devices score for each newspaper. As the modern graphic devices scale included 24 items, with each item's score ranging from one to three, the range of the modern devices score total was 24 to 72. The lower the score, the more traditional the paper, while the higher the score, the more modern.

FINDINGS

Circulation Gap and Distance Scores

Pairs of competing newspapers in close circulation battles tend to be more similar in their use of graphic devices than those which are not in close circulation battles.

In Los Angeles, for example, where the greatest circulation gap exists for newspapers in this study, (The Times leads the Herald Examiner by 774,000 copies.) the distance score between the two newspapers was 173. This score represents the greatest dissimilarity of the study. Meanwhile, in Baltimore where the circulation battle is close, (a gap of 46,000) the distance score between the Sun and the News American was 82, representing the greatest similarity in the study. (A distance score of 145 would indicate more dissimilarity than similarity between the two competing papers.) (See Table 2)

Specific findings of the distance question for the 20 newspapers in the 10 cities follow:

Baltimore

The Sun and the News American are remarkably similar in their appearance, with a graphic distance scale score of 82, the lowest among the 10 cities studied.

Accounting for this high similarity score were the

Table 2
Distance Score for Competing Papers

City	Papers	Circulation Gap[1]	Distance Score[2]
Baltimore	Sun News American	46,000	82
Dallas	Morning News Times Herald	48,000	112
Cincinnati	Enquirer Post	42,000	112
Detroit	News Free Press	9,000	113
Columbus	Dispatch Citizen-Journal	85,000	123
St. Louis	Globe-Democrat Post-Dispatch	25,000	125
San Francisco	Chronicle Examiner	381,000	144
Houston	Chronicle Post	43,000	145
Pittsburgh	Press Post-Gazette	78,000	164
Los Angeles	Times Herald Examiner	774,000	173

[1]Circulation Gap is the difference between the average daily circulation for the competing newspapers.

[2]Lower scores represents similarity; higher scores represents dissimilarity.

following modern graphic features common to both publications: the use of a modern flag, the regular use of teasers and the large size and varied location of the front page's dominant photograph.

Dallas

The Morning News and Times Herald scored 112 on the graphic distance scale, indicating that the front pages are similar in design. Design factors accounting for this similarity include: the dominant photo's size (3.5-column average for the Morning News and 4-column average for the Times Herald) and location (middle of the page for both).

Additionally, both papers use the same Roman headline style; both use drops; both use spot color, and both use extensive artwork. There were, however, some differences: the Morning News uses a digest on the front page--a modern device--while the Times Herald places its digest on page 2 in the two left columns.

Cincinnati

On the graphic distance scale, the Cincinnati Enquirer and the Post scored 112, indicating they are similar in their design. Factors accounting for that score include: both papers have teasers which always run in color; both use extensive artwork, also often in color, and they tend to have both horizontal and vertical design elements in their front page design.

There are differences, however, which primarily include the flag--the Enquirer runs its name in all caps while the Post runs its name in reversed type with a dark blue background. Additionally, the Enquirer uses a great many boxed items. In

fact, the entire page is boxed.

Detroit

The Detroit News and the Free Press scored a 113, on the graphic distance scale, indicating that the front pages are similar in design. Factors accounting for this similarity include: both papers use a serif headline typeface; both papers use reverse kickers; both papers use artwork above their flags, and both use 4-color photographs each day. Additionally, they both tend to place their lead story in the traditional upper right location. There are differences, however, that include the placement of the dominant photo: the News tends to place it in the upper left while the Free Press tends to vary its placement.

Columbus

On the graphic distance scale, the Dispatch and the Citizen-Journal scored 123, indicating that they are somewhat different in appearance. Design elements contributing to this difference include: the Dispatch's use of sandwiches and 4-color photographs (four out of five days). Additionally, the Citizen-Journal boldfaces the headline of the lead story and uses a horizontal design compared to the horizontal and vertical combination of the Dispatch. They are alike in that both papers use teasers, and both tend to place their dominant photograph in the middle of the page.

St. Louis

The graphic distance score of 125 indicates that the Post-Dispatch and the Globe-Democrat share a variety of graphic similarities and differences: both papers place their flags at

the top of the page, both papers use spot and 4-color, and both tend to span their lead story across all six columns under the flag. Differences include the more modern style, including a digest, that the Globe-Democrat uses.

San Francisco

On the graphic distance scale, the score for the San Francisco newspapers was 144, indicating dissimilarity in appearance. Several factors account for these differences: the Chronicle's use of boldface lead paragraphs for all stories and the type of items the newspapers place atop their flags: the Chronicle places a story while the Examiner places teasers. Overall, the Chronicle presents a flashy vertical appearance, including reverse headlines, while the Examiner has a more horizontal look.

Houston

When comparing these two papers on the graphic distance scale, they scored 145 indicating dissimilarity. An outstanding difference is the flag--the Post uses a 3-column flag while the Chronicle uses a traditional 6-column design. The Post also uses unevenly wrapped stories, bolder sanserif headlines and bolder and larger tooling lines. Additionally, the Post uses teasers which can appear anywhere on the page.

Pittsburgh

On the graphic distance scale, the score for the two papers was 164, indicating that the papers are very dissimilar in their front page appearance. Factors accounting for this score include: the Post-Gazette's uses a news digest while the Press does not; the Press uses sandwiches and kickers while

the Post-Gazette does not, and the Post-Gazette places its lead story in the traditional upper right hand location while the Press usually runs its lead story across the top width of the page.

Los Angeles

The graphic distance score of 173 indicates that the two papers are very dissimilar. Design elements contributing to this wide difference include: the Times uses a vertical format without color but with traditional kickers and drops while the Herald Examiner uses a modular format that includes teasers in spot color. Also, the Times uses a traditional text flag across the six columns while the Herald Examiner uses a modern face across three columns.

Trailers Versus Leaders and Their Use of Modern Devices

Newspaper trailers (less circulation) tend to be more modern in their use of modern graphic devices (See Appendix B, Modern Devices Scale) than newspaper leaders (more circulation). The average modern devices score for the trailers was 51.2 while the average modern devices score for the leaders was 40.6. This tendency proved to be accurate for eight of the 10 markets. The exceptions were Pittsburgh and St. Louis where the circulation leaders (Press and Globe-Democrat) scored higher on the modern graphic devices scale than the trailers. (See Table 3)

The notion of circulation trailers using more modern graphic devices can be further demonstrated by observing only the "showy" devices of page design. These devices include: color, artwork, overall style or format, dominant photo size and location and

Table 3
Modern Graphic Devices Usage: Trailers Versus Leaders

City	Paper	Trailer/ Leader	Modern Score[1]	Distance Rank[2]
Los Angeles	Herald Examiner	Trailer	56	
	Times	Leader	25	1
San Francisco	Examiner	Trailer	56	
	Chronicle	Leader	43	2
Houston	Post	Trailer	54	
	Chronicle	Leader	42	3
Cincinnati	Post	Trailer	52	
	Enquirer	Leader	41	4
Dallas	Times Herald	Trailer	46	
	Morning News	Leader	38	5
Detroit	Free Press	Trailer	50	
	News	Leader	45	6
St. Louis	Globe-Democrat	Leader	48	
	Post-Dispatch	Trailer	43	6
Pittsburgh	Press	Leader	45	
	Post-Gazette	Trailer	41	8
Columbus	Citizen-Journal	Trailer	49	
	Dispatch	Leader	45	9
Baltimore	News American	Trailer	56	
	Sun	Leader	43	10

[1]Higher scores represent more usage of modern graphic devices; lower score represent less usage.

[2]Rank was based upon the difference between the modern score for the two competing papers within each city.

lead story placement. These six elements of front page design could be referred to as the immediate reward items that Rarick and Hartman[53] mentioned.

Again, the circulation trailers were more modern as eight of the 10 trailers scored higher (used a greater number of modern showy devices) than the leaders. Those papers not fitting into the norm were the Pittsburgh Press and the St. Louis Globe-Democrat, circulation leaders that are more modern in their design than the corresponding trailing paper. (See Table 4)

Specific findings of the graphic devices research question for the 20 newspapers:

Los Angeles

When comparing the two papers on the modern graphic devices scale, the Herald Examiner scored 56, the most graphically modern of any of the papers (tied with the Examiner) while the Times scored 25, the most graphically traditional.

The Herald Examiner runs its lead story across the top of the page while the Times uses the 6-column banner with the traditional drop down into the right columns. Other modern graphic devices that the Herald Examiner uses include: five stories on the front page as opposed to the Times' eight, and use of teasers, spot color, artwork and overlines--none of which appears in the Times.

San Francisco

On the measurement of the use of modern graphic devices, the Chronicle's score was 43 and the Examiner's was 56, indicating the latter is to be more modern in design. Among the more

Table 4
Use of Showy Devices: Trailers Versus Leaders

City	Papers	Color	Artwork	Format	Photo Size	Dominant Photo Location	Lead Story Placement	Score[1]
Baltimore	Sun	5	5	1	2	3	1	17
	News American	4	5	3	2	3	3	20
San Francisco	Chronicle	2	4	1	2	3	1	13
	Examiner	4	6	2	2	3	3	20
Pittsburgh	Press	3	4	2	3	3	2	17
	Post-Gazette	4	4	1	2	3	1	15
Detroit	News	6	6	1	2	1	1	17
	Free Press	6	6	1	2	3	1	19
Columbus	Dispatch	6	3	1	2	3	2	17
	Citizen-Journal	4	5	2	3	3	3	20
Los Angeles	Times	2	2	1	2	1	1	9
	Herald Examiner	4	6	3	2	3	2	20
St. Louis	Globe-Democrat	6	4	2	2	3	2	19
	Post-Dispatch	4	5	1	2	3	2	17
Houston	Chronicle	6	4	2	2	3	2	19
	Post	6	6	1	3	3	3	22
Dallas	Morning News	5	5	1	2	3	1	17
	Times Herald	5	6	2	2	3	2	21
Cincinnati	Enquirer	4	4	1	2	2	1	14
	Post	5	5	2	2	3	2	19

[1]The score was obtained by adding the six "showy devices" taken from the modern graphic devices scale. The color score represents adding both spot and 4-color individual scores together. The artwork score was obtained by adding the two scores representing use of graphic devices: tooling lines, screens, maps and charts, etc. High scores represent a higher use of modern graphic devices. Low scores represent less use of modern graphic devices. Possible range is from a low of eight (no use of modern devices) to a 24 (complete use of modern graphic devices).

notable differences: use of maps, charts and graphs at the Examiner, the Examiner's practice of varying the location of its lead story and its use of modern drops (centered under the main head).

While the Examiner is the more modern of the two San Francisco dailies, the newspapers share their use of traditional flags, the absence of 4-color and their practice of varying front page column widths each day.

Houston

When comparing the papers on the modern graphic devices scale, the Post scored 54 while the Chronicle scored 42, indicating that the Post uses a great deal more modern graphic devices than its competition. In addition to the already mentioned flag and teasers, the Post also uses a very large dominant photograph--it averages five columns wide each day.

Interestingly enough, both papers run spot and 4-color on a daily basis, and the Chronicle tends to have a more horizontal overall design because the Post often uses the far right column for stacked teasers. This practice, along with a long one-column story in the left column, gives the Post a vertical look.

Cincinnati

The Enquirer scored 41 and the Post scored 52 on the modern graphics devices scale indicating that the Post uses a greater number of modern graphic devices. In addition to its traditionally designed flag, the Enquirer tends to run its dominant photo in the traditional upper left corner while the Post varies its placement. The Post also uses reversed kickers while the Enquirer uses traditional drops.

Dallas

On the modern graphic devices scale, the Morning News scored 38 while the Times Herald scored 46 indicating that the Times Herald is more modern in its design. Those elements include: a modern typeface for the flag; a combination of horizontal and vertical elements on the front page with the majority horizontal; teasers in color above the flag and the lead story placed across the top of the page as opposed to the traditional right hand placement used by the Morning News.

Detroit

When comparing the two papers on the modern graphic devices scale, the News scored 45 while the Free Press scored 50, indicating that the Free Press uses a few more modern graphic devices: more column width variation; teasers in color, and more reversed kickers.

While both papers use a combination of horizontal and vertical elements in their front page design, they both tend to use more vertical design elements--a traditional method.

St. Louis

The Globe-Democrat scored 48 while the Post-Dispatch scored 43, indicating that the former is slightly more modern in its design. That evidence (at the Globe-Democrat) includes: the use of a digest in the left columns; the use of sandwiches, and the overall design that tends to be more modern--even modular--than the Post-Dispatch which tends to use the more traditional vertical design.

Pittsburgh

On the measurement of the use of modern graphic devices, the Post-Gazette scored 41 while the Press scored 45, indicating that the Press is slightly more modern in its design. Accounting for this difference were the Press' use of kickers, sandwiches, overlines, a larger dominant photograph and fewer mug shots. However, the Post-Gazette's use of a news digest--another modern device--accounts for the closeness of the two scores.

Columbus

When comparing the two papers on the modern graphic devices scale, the Citizen-Journal scored 49 and the Dispatch scored 45 indicating that the Citizen-Journal is slightly more modern. Factors accounting for this slight difference include the lead story placement. The Dispatch tends to run its lead story under a banner while the Citizen-Journal varies its placement. Additionally, the Citizen-Journal tends to run its dominant photograph slightly larger than the Dispatch.

Baltimore

Both the Sun and News American avail themselves of the latest in contemporary design devices, resulting in a situation where two competing dailies appear to be seeking to out-modernize one another. The Sun scored a 51; the News American scored a 54. Both use color, a modern flag and a large dominant photograph which varies in its location from day-to-day.

Morning Versus Evening and All-Day Papers

Of the 20 newspapers in the study, 10 are morning papers, six are evening papers and four are published all day. (See Table 5) Of the 10 morning papers, five scored more traditional on the

Table 5
Modern Devices: Rank of the 20 Papers and Time of Publication

City	Paper	Modern Score[1]	Time of Publication[2]
Los Angeles	Herald Examiner	56	M
San Francisco	Examiner	56	E
Houston	Post	54	M
Baltimore	News American	54	E
Cincinnati	Post	52	E
Baltimore	Sun	51	All
Detroit	Free Press	50	M
Columbus	Citizen-Journal	49	M
St. Louis	Globe-Democrat	48	M
Dallas	Times Herald	46	All
Pittsburgh	Press	45	E
Detroit	News	45	All
Columbus	Dispatch	45	E
San Francisco	Chronicle	43	M
St. Louis	Post-Dispatch	43	E
Houston	Chronicle	42	All
Pittsburgh	Post-Gazette	41	M
Cincinnati	Enquirer	41	M
Dallas	Morning News	38	M
Los Angeles	Times	25	M

[1]Higher scores represent more usage of modern graphic devices; lower scores represent less usage. Possible range of scores: 24 to 72.

[2]M=morning; E=evening; and All=all-day publication.

modern graphic devices scale than their evening or all-day competition. The morning papers averaged 44.5 on the modern graphic devices scale as they used few modern graphic devices.

The four all-day papers tended to use a greater number of modern graphic devices and averaged 46.0 on the modern graphic devices scale while the evening papers used an even greater number of modern devices and averaged 49.2 on the scale.

Total Circulation and Modern Graphic Devices

Newspapers in this study varied in their circulations from a low of 119,000 for the Columbus Citizen-Journal to a high of more than 1,050,000 for the Los Angeles Times.

The seven newspapers with the smaller circulations (less than 200,000) tended to be the most modern in their use of modern graphic devices with an average score of 49.1 for the modern graphic devices scale. (See Table 6)

The six newspapers with circulations between 200,000 and 300,000 tended to be more traditional than the smaller papers, with an average score of 47.2 for the modern graphic devices scale.

Finally, the seven papers with circulations of more than 300,000 were the most traditional with an average score of 42.3 on the modern graphic devices scale.

Therefore, the larger circulation newspapers tended to be the most traditional while the smaller circulation papers tended to be the most modern in their use of graphic design elements.

Table 6
The Relationship of the Total Circulation
to the Use of Modern Graphic Devices

Newspaper	Circulation	Modern Graphic Score	Average
Columbus Citizen-Journal	119,000	49	
Baltimore News American	137,000	54	
Cincinnati Post	146,000	52	
San Francisco	156,000	56	
Pittsburgh Post-Gazette	181,000	41	
Baltimore Sun	183,000	51	
Cincinnati Enquirer	188,000	41	49.1
Columbus Dispatch	204,000	45	
St. Louis Post-Dispatch	235,000	43	
Pittsburgh Press	259,000	45	
St. Louis Globe-Democrat	260,000	48	
Dallas Times Herald	269,000	46	
Los Angeles Herald Examiner	278,000	56	47.2
Dallas Morning News	317,000	38	
Houston Post	376,000	54	
Houston Chronicle	419,000	42	
San Francisco Chronicle	537,000	43	
Detroit Free Press	631,000	49	
Detroit News	642,000	45	
Los Angeles Times	1,052,000	25	42.3

CONCLUSIONS

The results of this study suggest that in America's largest competitive newspaper markets, there is a trend toward conformity of appearance. Generally, as the competition increases,[54] so does the sameness.

In fact, in some of the cities included in this study (Detroit, Baltimore, Dallas and Cincinnati), the front pages of the two dailies are so often similar in format that an untrained observer might not be able tell the newspapers apart if the flags were concealed.

This conformity, found to a degree in most of the cities studied, may suggest that the revolution in newspaper layout and design has come full circle in the last 25 years. A glance back at newspapers of the ealy 1960s reveals a high level of appearance similarity in an age when the graphic and design options available to editors were few and when concern about appearance was quite limited.

By the mid-1970s, as modernization became more common, and as 8-column pages and column rules began to disappear from the American daily, design conformity decreased, as some newspapers had completely modernized, some were in the process and others stayed with their traditional appearance.

By 1984, however, practically every daily nespaper in the United States has taken some step toward contemporary design. Obviously, some have completely modernized the appearance, while others have retained some or most of the traditional look. Today, with the greater availability of--and increased concern about--

design and layout options, conformity will probably never be as great as it was in the years preceding the design revolution, but it certainly can be said that newspapers are beginning to look alike once again.

This idea that some newspapers in a market have modernized more rapidly than others is supported by some of the other findings in this study.

First, it was found that the circulation trailer in a market is more likely to use modern graphic devices than is the leader. These results are consistent with the pattern discovered a decade ago by Weaver, Mullins and McCombs.[56]

Also, this study found that morning newspapers tend to be more traditional in appearance than their evening or all-day counterparts. Morning newspapers, traditionally, have been perceived as more serious; meanwhile, afternoon dailies, which compete with television, have often been more innovative in creating a graphically vivid product.

While some of the newspapers analyzed in this study were found to be quite modern (for example, the Los Angeles Herald Examiner) and while others (for example, the Dallas Times Herald) are constantly modernizing, the results of this study indicate that, as a group, the largest circulation newspapers in the United States are less modern in appearance than other, smaller dailies. For example, only two of the 20 dailies have adopted the modern modular page design while nationally, about two-thirds of the daily newspapers have done so.[57]

Explanations for the results of this study are highly speculative. The design revolution in American newspapers is an

an ongoing phenomenon, and a shortage of previous reseach does not allow for ready explanations here.

One reason for the high level of conformity in appearance in the tight-circulation markets may be that editors do not want their product to be perceived as "too different" or "too radical." This strain toward sameness, first coined as "pack journalism" in a 1972 book,[58] held that journalists (reporters and editors) generally feel safest when they are part of a "pack" and do not deviate too radically from the competition. The idea that "they haven't used a color flag so why should we?" may be a consideration in some markets.

Of course, there are exceptions. In Houston, where the Chronicle and Post are in a tight circulation battle, the Post recently burst from of the pack and totally revised its once-staid product into a colorful expression of oddly shaped photos, teasers down one side of the page and other modern devices. Do its readers approve? Have Chronicle readers shifted? In Houston, it is too soon to tell, and what happens there may not provide guarantees to editors in other markets. But, the Houston situation bears close examination, because of the abrupt shift away from sameness.

Appendix A
Distance Scale

CITY_____

Category	Paper #1	Paper #2	Score
Flag style			
Flag width			
Flag placement			
Headline style			
Use of News Digest (Y/N)			
Digest Location			
Use of Index (Y/N)			
Index Location			
Use of teasers			
Dominant Photo (Size)			
Dominant Photo (Location)			
Use of mug shots			
Byline style			
Use of sandwiches			
Use of kickers			
Use of drops			
Use of spot color			
Use of 4-color			
Use of graphic devices			
Use of ears and content			
Body copy style and size			
Cutline style			
Use of overlines			
Overall style of page			
Lead story placement			
#of stories beginning			
# of columns			
Use of width variation			
Unusual differences			
		Total:	

Appendix B
Modern Devices Scale

CITY_____

Category	Paper #1 (Leading)	Paper #2 (Trailing)
Flag style		
Use of width variation		
# of stories beginning		
Lead story placement		
Overall style of page		
Overlines on dominant photo		
Use of ears and content		
Tooling lines, screens		
Charts, maps, artwork		
Use of spot color		
Use of 4-color		
Drops		
Kickers		
Sandwiches		
Mug shots		
Dominant Photo Location		
Dominant Photo Size		
Teasers (use of)		
Teasers (color)		
Index		
Digest		
Headline style		
Width of flag		
Flag placement		
	Total:	Total:

[1]This concept of a "marketplace of ideas" is popularly traced back to the writings of John Stuart Mill and the famous opinion of Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes in Abrams v. United States, 250 U.S. 616 (1919), which Holmes said: "The best test of truth is the power of the thought to get itself accepted in the competition of the market."

[2]Perhaps most notable among these was the legendary battle between Putlizer's New York World and Hearst's New York Journal in the 1890s.

[3]Illustrative of this low level of interest in graphics at newspapers is the fact that in the 1959-78 Cumulative Indexes to Periodical Literature, there are no articles listed dealing with newspaper design.

[4]Evidence of a growing interest in appearance of newspapers has its roots in several areas more studies of design and layout are being conducted; newspaper design seminars are becoming regular occurrences; a large number of newspapers have altered or totally redesigned their product; job openings for graphic artists are becoming more common in publications such as Editor & Publisher, which listed six such openings in its Feb. 11, 1984 issue.

[5]For example, in 1923, there was 2,382 daily newspapers in the United States; by 1982, that total had dropped to 1,711.

[6]1983 Editor & Publisher Yearbook.

[7]The cities are Los Angeles, Houston, Detroit, Dallas, San Francisco, Columbus, Pittsburgh, St. Louis, Baltimore and Cincinnati.

[8]In 1982, national circulation among dailies reached an all time record of 62.4 million copies. Source: 1983 Editor & Publisher Yearbook. Also, the typical newspaper copy now reaches 2.77 persons. Fitzgerald, Mark, "A Frustrating Year for Newspapers," Editor & Publisher, (51) Jan. 7, 1984, pp. 9-11.

[9]1931 Directory of Newspapers and Periodicals, Philadelphia: N.W. Ayers, Inc., 1931.

[10]About 4 percent of the newspaper cities in the nation have competing newspapers. Hynds, Ernest, American Newspapers in the 1980s, (New York: Hastings House, 1980).

[11]Under the Newspaper Preservation Act (1970), newspapers in the same city may consolidate their advertising, printing and circulation operations if one of the papers is declared in danger of financial collapse. Twenty-four cities currently have newspapers functioning under these so-called joint operating agreements. Under these JOAs, the newspapers remain editorially separate. The thrust behind these pacts is that the preservation of editorial diversity outweights any anticompetitive effects

such mergers may have. JOA papers in this study include: Cincinnati, Columbus, San Francisco, Pittsburgh and St. Louis.

[12]Miles, Christine, "Get Bigger or Get Out," Forbes, June 6, 1982, pp. 161-162.

[13]In H.A. Shapiro, Giving a Graphic Example: The Increasing Use of Charts and Maps," Nieman Reports, 36 (1): 4-7 (1982). The author notes that the New York Times graphics arts department comprises 60 staffers. Christine Ogan, Ida Plymale, D. Lynn Smith, William H. Turpin and Donald L. Shaw, "The Changing Front Page of The New York Times, 1900-1970, JOURNALISM QUARTERLY, 52: 340-344 (1975).

[14]Gerald C. Stone, J.C. Schweitzer and David H. Weaver, "Adoption of Modern Newspaper Design," JOURNALISM QUARTERLY, 55: 761-766 (1978).

[15]J.W. Click and Guido H. Stempel III, "Rate of Adoption of Modern Format by Daily Newspapers," Washington, D.C.: American Newspapers Publishers Association News Research Report, 22: 6-10, (September 28, 1979).

[16]Steve Pasternack and Sandra H. Utt, "A Study of America's Front Pages: How They Look." Paper presented to Visual Communication Division, Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication, Corvallis, Oregon, August, 1983.

[17]"Are readers Getting What They Want?" Editor & Publisher, December 3, 1983, pp. 16-17.

[18]Howard Finberg, "Newspapers Making Wide Use of Better Visuals, APME News, Oct. 1983, pp. 14-15.

[19]Pasternack and Utt, op. cit.

[20]Kenneth Starck, "Producer/Consumer Perceptions of the Function of a Daily Newspaper," JOURNALISM QUARTERLY, 51: (1974) 670-676.

[21]The item as worded: "A newspaper should be neat and attractive in appearance."

[22]J.W. Click and Guido H. Stempel III, Reader Response to Front Pages With Four Color Halftones," JOURNALISM QUARTERLY, 53: 736-738 (1976).

[23]Mario R. Garcia, J.W. Click and Guido H. Stempel III, "Subscribers' Reactions to Redesign of the St. Cloud Daily Times," Washington, D.C.: American Newspaper Publishers Association News Research Report, 32: (September, 3, 1981).

[24]Click and Stempel, (1976), op. cit.

[26]John C. Schweitzer, "Newspaper Front Pages Revisited:

Reader Reactions," Newspaper Research Journal, 2 12-18 (1980).

[26]Garcia, Click and Stempel, op. cit.

[27]Pasternack and Utt, op. cit.

[28]Theresa G. Siskind, "The Effect of Newspaper Design on Reader Preferences," JOURNALISM QUARTERLY, (1979) 56: 54-61.

[29]Ibid., p. 61.

[30]Attitudes Toward the Orlando Sentinel in Central Florida Market, (Orlando Sentinel), 1984.

[31]Rosas, Johnnie Lou, "The Star-News Blooms with A Whole New Look," Editorial Focus, March, 1984, p. 4.

[32]"Cat On a Hot Front Page," Publishers' Auxiliary, Feb. 13, 1984, p. 5.

[33]William Geist, "Two Newspapers in Trenton Fight it Out," New York Times, July 30, 1983, p. 28.

[34]See, for example, advertisement of back page of Dec. 17, 1983 Editor & Publisher.

[35]William A. Henry, "The Best Newspapers Under the Sun," Time, April 26, 1982, pp. 66-67.

[36]Robert Reinhold, "Houston Post 'For Sale' Sign Stirs Speculation on Two Papers," New York Times, July 30, 1983, p. 28

[37]Andrew Radolf, "Competition Heats Up in Baltimore," Editor & Publisher, Dec. 3, 1983, pp. 20-22.

[39]Mark Fitzgerald, High Stakes Battle in Detroit," Editor & Publisher, Jan. 14, 1984, pp. 10-13.

[40]M.L. Stein, "Color Helps Dailies Compete in Florida and Texas," Editor & Publisher, Sept. 24, 1983, pp. 9, 31.

[41]The Houston Post, purchased by Calgary and Edmonton, was redesigned January, 1984.

[42]David H. Weaver, L.E. Mullins and Maxwell E. McCombs, "Competing Daily Newspapers: A Comparison of Content and Format," Washington, D.C.: American Newspaper Publishers Association News Research Bulletin, 8: (December 31, 1974).

[43]Ibid., p. 11.

[44]John C. Schweitzer, David H. Weaver and Gerald C. Stone, "Morning-Evening Newspaper Circulation: What Effect Do Appearance and Content Have?" JOURNALISM QUARTERLY, 54: 515-522 (1977).

[45]J.W. Click and Guido H. Stempel III, Reader Response to Front Pages With Modular Format and Color," Washington, D.C.: American Newspaper Publishers Association News Research Report, 35: (July 29, 1982).

[46]Pasternack and Utt, op. cit.

[47]Galen Rarick and Barrie Hartman, "The Effects of Competition on One Daily Newspaper's Content," JOURNALISM QUARTERLY, 43 (1966), 459-463.

[48]Raymond B. Nixon, "Content of Non-Competitive vs. Competitive Newspapers," JOURNALISM QUARTERLY, 33: (1956) 299-314.

[49]Stanley Bigmar., "Rivals in Conformity: A Study of Two Competing Dailies," JOURNALISM QUARTERLY, 33: (1956) 299-314.

[50]Birthney Ardoin, "A Comparison of Newspapers Under Joint Printing Contracts," JOURNALISM QUARTERLY, 50: 1973 340-347.

[51]John Schweitzer and Elaine Goldman, "Does Newspaper Competition Make a Difference to Readers?" JOURNALISM QUARTERLY, 52: (1975) 706-710.

[52]The Cincinnati Enquirer and the Post were examined for the week of Monday, Feb. 20 to Friday, Feb. 24.

[53]Rarick and Hartman, op. cit.

[54]An increase in competition is measured by the size of the circulation gap between the leader and the trailer.

[55]Totally different would be applicable to the situation in Los Angeles; in San Francisco, meanwhile, the two dailies have but one similarity: a traditional flag.

[56]Weaver, Mullins and McCombs, op. cit.

[57]Pasternack and Utt, op. cit.

[58]Timothy Crouse, The Boys on the Bus, (New York: Random House, 1973).